growth in this new area are equitably distributed.

The Ministerial Declaration with which the Conference concluded has, in essentials, endorsed India's standpoint on the above issues.

Barriers imposed on the movement of skilled labourers by North America and Europe

2145. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some Indian services like software, consultancy are losing their edge in the global market due to protective and non-tariff barriers imposed on the movement of skilled labourers by North America and Europe;

(b) if so, details of representations if any received in this regard;

(c) the details of action initiated during 1996-97 and proposed during the 1998-99 to take up the issue of market access to movement of "natural persons" with WTO to ensure meaningful balance in market area benefits in the service sector; and

(d) the details of the action taken/ proposed for redressal of the issue at multilateral, regional and bilateral formus.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) In the area of services, particularly Indian computer software exporters are facing non-tariff barriers in North American and European markets inter-alia by way of visa regulations which restrict and impose various conditions for the free movement of software personnel. The issue of better market access and denial/ delay in obtaining visas/work permits for Indian service providers is taken up bilaterally with the concerned countries as well as at appropriate international fora. Comprehensive round of Services negotiations under General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) in WTO is scheduled to begin in the year 2000. Enhanced market access through the mode of movement of natural persons shall also be part of these negotiations. The Government is preparing for these negotiations.

Assessment of export promotion schemes

2146. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the last four years, Government doled out Rs. 16,000 crore to exporters via export promotion schemes;

(b) if so, the details thereof and how much foreign exchange has been earned as a result thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that no mechanism has been set up to monitor the earning of foreign exchange on these schemes; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Forgoing or refund of customs duties on the inputs required for the export products is inherent in the various export schemes. This is based on the universal principle that export goods should either not be subject to such duties in the first instance by granting duty exemptions; or the duties, if already paid, should be neutralised through the mechanism of retund/rebate, drawback, pass book credit, etc. Viewed in this context, it cannot be said that the Government has doled out huge amount* of money to the exporters via the export promotion schemes.

(b) Various export schemes have played a very significant role in the country's export performance. It is however not possible to precisely quantity how much foreign exchange has been earned on account of the operation of different export schemes, since exports, and the foreign exchange earnings arising therefrom, are influenced by several